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QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES, INCLUDING PALESTINE

Note verbale dated 26 February 1993 from the Permanent Mission of the League of Arab States to the United Nations Office at Geneva, addressed to the Centre for Human Rights

The Permanent Mission of the League of Arab States to the United Nations Office at Geneva presents its compliments to the Centre for Human Rights and has the honour to transmit herewith the text of the statement by the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States following the special meeting of the Council of the League on 16 February 1993 on the escalation and dangers faced by the Palestinian people in the occupied Arab and Palestinian territories.

The Permanent Mission of the League of Arab States requests the Centre for Human Rights to treat this note as an official document of the forty-ninth session of the Commission on Human Rights and to circulate it to its members.

GE.93-12439 (E)

Statement made by the Secretary-General of the Arab League at the Conclusion of the Proceedings of the League's Council, 16 February 1993

The Council of the Arab League met on Tuesday, 16 February 1993, to consider the dangerous escalation facing the Palestinian people and their property in the Gaza Strip, as well as the need to provide them with the necessary international protection, in accordance with Security Council resolution 681 (1990).

There has lately been a marked increase in the number of Palestinian martyrs, especially children, killed by the bullets of Israeli soldiers in the occupied Palestinian territories. On 8 February 1993, the Israeli authorities stated that Israeli soldiers had killed 3 Palestinian demonstrators in the occupied West Bank, raising to 10 the number of Palestinian martyrs killed in the occupied Palestinian territories during a three-day period. This brings the number of martyrs since the deportation of hundreds of Palestinians by Israel on 17 December 1992 to more than 40, not to mention the hundreds of wounded. The savagery of the occupation forces in violating human rights has reached the point where they use anti-tank missiles to demolish dozens of houses simultaneously.

What makes the situation in the occupied Arab territories even more dangerous is the amendment made to the Penal Code at the beginning of 1992 by the Israeli occupation authorities. The amendment has brought a wholesale increase in the number of martyrs who have died at the hands of Israeli death squads, since it absolves them from any criminal responsibility, and even precludes any investigation. The amendment has therefore been called the "free hunting" law.

As a result of the dramatic increase in human rights violations in the occupied territories following the accession to power of the Rabin Government, the number of martyrs killed by the bullets of the occupation forces has doubled. Most of them were unarmed, including a large number of children. In addition, new methods have been devised to demolish houses, torture citizens and evict people from their land. Such acts constitute flagrant violations of human rights and a gross mockery of international covenants and practices, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, as it applies to civilians in territories occupied by Israel.

Thus, today's meeting reiterates its strong disapproval and condemnation of these arbitrary practices that are incompatible with the most elementary norms of international humanitarian law. The practices reveal that the proclaimed desire of Israeli authorities to resolve the question of Palestine and bring peace to the region cannot be true. Given the increasingly dangerous situation, the participants appeal to the international community,

as represented at the United Nations, especially in the Commission on Human Rights, to take urgent action to put an end to abuses by Israel and to its unbridled oppression of civilians, with complete disregard for all international covenants and resolutions of the international community.

The meeting asserts that Israel's decision to allow a number of deportees to return cannot be considered as full implementation of Security Council resolution 799 (1992). The meeting therefore demands the full implementation of the resolution with all the deportees being allowed to return immediately.